

REMARKS

Claims 1-5 and 29 are now pending in the application. Minor amendments to Claim 1 are of an equivalent scope as originally filed and, thus, are not a narrowing amendment. In addition, Claims 31-34 have been added to the present invention. Basis for these new claims may be found throughout the application as originally filed.

Claims 1, 2, 4, 5 and 29 were previously rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,824,177 (Yoshihara) or an equivalent, Japanese Patent No. 9-27466. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Yoshihara is directed generally to a method for manufacturing a semiconductor device. Of interest, Yoshihara discloses an adhesive sheet 2 which covers the surface of a semiconductor wafer 1 as shown in Figure 4A. However, the adhesive characteristic (or adhesive force) of the adhesive material in Yoshihara is uniform across the entire surface of the adhesive sheet 2. In other words, the adhesive force is not varied across the surface of the sheet. As a result, the adhesive sheet needs to have a recess and convex shape so that the adhesive does not contact movable parts associated with the semiconductor device.

In contrast, adhesive the adhesive characteristic varies across the surface of the adhesive sheet in Applicant's claimed invention. Specifically, Applicant's claimed invention recites "the adhesive portion having a specific region facing the structure portion and a vicinal region surrounding the specific region, where the

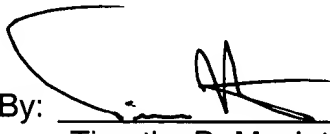
specific region exhibits an adhesive characteristic having a value less than an adhesive characteristic exhibited by the vicinal region” in combination with other elements of the claims. Unlike in Yoshihara, Applicant’s claimed invention is able to use a flat adhesive sheet.

Furthermore, the sheet surface is typically pressurized by water during the dicing process. In the case of the structure disclosed in Yoshihara, the recess and convex shapes may be crushed or broken by the water pressure. As a result, the structure components on the semiconductor wafer may contact the adhesive sheet, thereby adhering the components to the adhesive sheet. On the other hand, since the regions facing the structural components are formed with a very low adhesive characteristic in Applicant’s claimed invention, in the event of contact, these regions will not adhere to the structural components, thereby avoiding any unnecessary problems. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that Applicant’s claimed invention is patentability distinct over Yoshihara.

Prompt and favorable consideration of this amendment is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (248) 641-1600.

Respectfully submitted,

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